

**ON TRACK SILSOE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**  
**With regard to DfE advice and guidance, 'Preventing and tackling bullying'**  
**(updated July 2017), 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2016) and 'Working**  
**Together to Safeguard Children (2018)**

All policies are generated and reviewed with an awareness of equality and diversity in relation to students, staff and visitors to On Track.

All policies are generated and reviewed placing safeguarding at the heart of all that we do.

In some On Track schools, the role of Head Teacher, referred to below, is undertaken by an appropriately experienced Manager.

**The first part of this policy provides the overview to anti-bullying, but the Head Teacher of each school will complete the policy, providing the detail of anti-bullying measures for that specific group of students.**

### **Related policies**

Safeguarding and Child Protection policy  
Online Safety Policy  
Behaviour Management Policy  
Equality and Diversity Policy  
Incident and Information Reporting Policy  
Keyworking Policy  
PSHE Policy  
Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development Policy  
Special Needs and Inclusion Policy  
Student Complaints Policy  
Student Voice Policy

### **What is bullying?**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a first priority, but emotional bullying can cause more long term damage than physical bullying.

Bullying often involves an imbalance of power, which could make it particularly difficult for a victim to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

## **Cyber-bullying**

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more easily accessed as people forward on content at a click. It is particularly damaging as it is much more difficult for the victim to ignore as it can intrude on all aspects of their internet use throughout the day.

Access to support for staff and students relating to cyber-bullying and all other aspects of bullying can be found in the 'further resources' section of 'Preventing and tackling bullying' (2017), which can be found on the resources gateway.

Cyberbullying is bullying by electronic means. This could be via a smartphone, computer, laptop, tablet or online gaming platform and it can take place on a range of online or mobile services, such as text, email, social networking sites, messenger, photo sharing services, chat, webcams, visual learning environments and online games.

Cyberbullying can be an extension of bullying already happening eg in the community, or it can be between people who have never met. It can take a wide range of forms, threats, intimidation, name calling, harassment, exclusion, gaining access to unauthorised information on line (hacking), impersonation, posting personal information, sexting/sexualised or manipulation.

Young people are always connected so the target of cyberbullying can be reached 24/7, wherever they are. It is inescapable and the victim may not always know who is bullying them, which adds to their distress

Young people often find it hard to know whether something is cyberbullying or not, as online there are fewer cues to understand the intention of the person communicating with you and words can be interpreted in different ways

Many of these issues are more of a problem to students with Communication or Learning Difficulties.

On a positive note, evidence of cyberbullying can be collected and retained eg a text or a screenshot. This can be empowering to a victim trying to get support from adults.

If authorised by the Head Teacher, school staff have the power to confiscate electronic devices such as mobile phones and when that has occurred, files and data can be examined and deleted where there is good reason to do so. Should this occur, any material found that contains evidence of an offence, extreme pornography or a pornographic image relating to a child, should be handed to the police rather than deleted. There is no need to have parental consent in these circumstances. Having said that, many staff may feel that this could be seen as very damaging to relationships and Head Teachers may wish to take different steps to protect students from cyber-bullying. Further information will be provided in Part 2 of this policy.

## **Safeguarding**

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern. Such concerns should be followed up in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## **Peer on peer abuse**

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Any concerns that peer on peer abuse may be an issue should be reported in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

Staff should be mindful of teenage relationship abuse. If the allegation:

- Is made against an older student and refers to their behaviour towards a younger or more vulnerable student
- Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- Raises risk factors for other students or indicates that other students may have been affected
- Indicates that young people outside the school may have been affected by this student

Examples of safeguarding issues against a student could include:

- Physical abuse - violence, especially pre-planned, forcing others to use drugs or alcohol or join a gang
- Emotional abuse - blackmail or extortion, threats or intimidation
- Sexual abuse - indecent exposure, indecent touching, sexual assault, forcing others to watch pornography or take part in texting
- Sexual exploitation - encouraging others to take part in inappropriate sexual behaviour, photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

### **Criminal aspects to consider**

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offense, some types of harassment, threat or communication can be. For example, sending an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offense if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient. (Malicious Communications Act 1988)

### **Bullying which occurs outside the school premises**

The Head teacher does have the power to discipline for incidents that occur away from the school, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate students' behaviour in those circumstances. As many of the On Track schools are not within the community where the student lives, care should be taken in exercising this option. Further detail on this will be given in Part 2 of this policy.

### **Vulnerable students**

Students perceived by others to be in some way different are particularly vulnerable to bullying. On Track students have special educational needs, but may still target those with a different need or disability, those who are adopted, those suffering from a health problem or those with caring responsibilities.

Each of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act may give rise to bullying (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

Those going through a personal or family crisis may be not only vulnerable to bullying, but need intensive support to deal with the impact of bullying.

Students with special educational needs or disabilities can lack the social or communication skills to report incidents and may not even recognise incidents of bullying, meaning that staff will need to be particularly aware and proactive.

### **Prevention**

At an individual level staff should work to address issues between students before they escalate into incidents, particularly if an imbalance of power exists. A whole school approach should be devised, with reference to the following:

- Involvement of parents to ensure they feel confident that the school will take complaints relating to bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects all involved. It is to be hoped that they will reinforce the value of mutual respect at home.

- Involvement of students to ensure they understand the school's policy and ethos and make clear that they have a role in prevention.
- Evaluation and updating of the school's approach to take account of developments in technology and ensuring that every student has signed the acceptable use policy. The CEOP trained e-safety lead will be invaluable in supporting this
- The consequences of bullying should reflect the seriousness of the incident so that all can see that bullying is unacceptable.
- Open discussion of differences between people that could motivate bullying and ensure that any prejudice based language is known by all to be unacceptable.
- Use of specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems
- Provision of staff training. All staff are encouraged to access the 'Preventing Bullying' programme on the Educare website. Other more specific training programmes should be sought as required.
- Working alongside other professionals where bullying is particularly serious or persistent or where a criminal offence may have occurred.
- Making it easy for students to report bullying so they know they will be listened to and action will be taken
- Creation of an inclusive environment, where students can openly discuss the cause of their bullying without fear of further bullying or discrimination.

**The following details anti-bullying policy and procedures at the Silsoe On Track school. This will be completed by the Head Teacher and reviewed annually.**

Detail should include all aspects of the following, although this is not exhaustive and Head teachers may choose to include additional material:

- Preventative Work- all students have a curriculum delivery of Personal, social and health education and within this programme there is work undertaken on relationships and building positive relationships with others. Staff are also very aware of the impact of bullying which can occur at unstructured times during breaks and lunchtimes, therefore there are a good range of staff supported activities at break times, including card games, football, Colouring club, Uno Competition and Darts.
- When staff are aware that a bullying incident has occurred they complete a concern form, which is shared with all staff across the team. This then highlights the potential issues and allows staff to be vigilant and to raise the issues during a tutorial for both the victim and the perpetrator. Where these concerns could impact after school then parents are informed via a phone call which is logged
- Cyber bullying is discussed during the ICT lessons and also whenever there are potential issues of bullying known to have arisen through social media. An E -Safety programme is delivered and by the ICT teacher and this is revisited where necessary. There are E-safety posters around the school and all staff are aware and proactive in explaining the dangers.
- All students have an open door key worker to talk through any concern and issues and also positives of how they have behaved and dealt with issues from the day, support is provided to victim and perpetrator during these tutorial lessons and also the Thrive practitioners become involved where appropriate.
- External services can be used to support the student experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a student engaging in bullying through Bedfordshire CAMHS team
- Where there may be an issue of ongoing bullying over time, students will have a programme of support through Thrive practitioner, changes or amendments to timetables of the perpetrator and parents are informed of the work being undertaken around bullying and any necessary changes to keep students safe.

The completed policy should be returned to the Directors for agreement after initial completion and after each review.

## **Review**

In order to ensure that this policy is relevant to the work that you are doing, it would be helpful to receive feedback. If you have any comments to make, or suggestions for additions or amendments, please email [directors@ontrackededucation.com](mailto:directors@ontrackededucation.com)

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